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# TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE NEWTON URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1918.

**AREA and POPULATION.**—The district includes the parishes of Wolborough, Highweek and Milber, with a total acreage of 4,132, and a population at the last census of 13,712. The figures for calculating the various rates now supplied by the Registrar General are 11,535 for death rates, and 12,925 for the birth rate.

**RATEABLE VALUE** amounts to £65,140—(Wolborough, £46,279; Highweek, £17,237; Milber, £1,624).

**BALANCE OF LOANS OUTSTANDING** £27,745, of which £2,015 is for sewerage, and £260 for public conveniences.

Outdoor Relief in 1918 was given to the extent of £1,689 19s. 2d., which is 2s. 11d. per head of the population.

**RAINFALL** in 1918 amounted to 35.91 inches at Highweek, which is not quite two inches below the average.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**—The number of deaths registered in the district was 274, of which 129 took place in Public Institutions (Union House, 119; Hospital, 6; and Isolation Hospital, 4); 94 of these are deducted, with 10 other transferable deaths, which belong to other districts, while nine deaths in the County Asylum, and nine others among former residents, are added. This gives a nett total of 188 (90 in males and 98 in females), equal to a general death rate of 16.3 per 1,000, which is slightly higher than that of 1917 (16.1); the decennial average works out at 14.5.

The deaths in the four quarters were 51, 36, 27 and 74, giving rates per 1,000 per annum of 17.7, 12.5, 9.3 and 25.7 respectively; thus the last quarter again showed far the highest mortality.

The percentage of deaths under one year to the total was 10.6, and of those over 65 years, 38.8; these compare with 10.9 and 47.9. The average age at death was 47.4 years, as against 54.1 in 1917.

**THE INFANTILE MORTALITY** or deaths under one year to 1,000 births, was 101, as compared with 109 in the previous year, and a decennial average of 87.

The causes of infant mortality were: Measles, 1; influenza, 1; constitutional diseases, 4; diseases of the nervous system, 1; of the respiratory system, 5; of the digestive system, 2; premature birth, 4; and debility, 2.

Two died in the Union House; of the 18 remaining all belonged to the working classes. In seven cases (or omitting premature births), 50 per cent., the children were either wholly or partially brought up by hand. All but one were in houses on the lower levels and 13 in the older dwellings; no definite insanitary conditions were found. The Courts were credited with four fatalities, or about 8 per 1,000, as compared with 1.5 for the rest of the town.

Eleven children were said to have been born delicate, whilst in 10 instances one or other parent had a weak constitution; 5 were first born, and 4 were twins.

The births of 105 boys and 94 girls give a general rate of 15.4 per 1,000; this is slightly above that of the preceding year (14.5), but 3 points below the decennial average of 18.6.

The births for the four quarters of the year numbered 56, 45, 49, 49, giving rates per 1,000 per annum of 17.3, 13.9, 15.2 and 15.2 respectively.

The natural increase, or excess of births over deaths, was 11, or not quite 1 per 1,000 of the population.

In the Union House (total population about 400), there were 119 deaths, of which 63 were in males and 56 in females. Sixty-two were in persons over 65 years of age, and the average age at death was 57.7 years. Their local distribution was as follows: Newton Urban, 29; Newton Rural, 16; Dawlish, 5; Torquay, 47; Teignmouth, 10; Ashburton, 3; Devonport 5; and visitors, 4.

In the other public institutions there were 10 deaths—6 in the Hospital (Newton Urban, 4; Newton Rural, 1; and visitor, 1), and four in the Isolation Hospital (equally divided between the Rural and Urban Districts).

On the whole the figures differ little from those of 1917: the death rate is still somewhat high, but 27 fatalities from influenza represents in itself a rate of 2.3 per 1,000. The zymotic and infant rate are practically stationary, while the birth rate has slightly improved.

Turning to chief causes of fatality, **PHTHISIS** with 18 deaths, and a rate of 1.6 per 1,000, is still considerably above the average; fatalities from other tubercular diseases were again few (3).

**CANCER** has fallen from 17 to 12, equal to a rate of 1.0. The combined rate from these two diseases worked out at 2.6, while the average for the years 1903-1917 was 2.1.

Mortality from **RESPIRATORY** (31) and **CIRCULATORY** diseases (35) showed little change; deaths from **VIOLENCE** remained at the same figure (3).

**ZYMOTIC DISEASE.**—From the seven ordinary zymotic diseases 4 deaths were registered: one each from typhoid fever, diphtheria, measles and diarrhoea; this gives a rate of .35 per 1,000, as compared with .42 in 1917, and a decennial average of .94.

Notifications of infectious disease were 241 in number: they included 186 measles, 2 scarlet fever, 6 diphtheria, 1 typhoid fever, and 46 tuberculosis.

**MEASLES.**—An outbreak of this disease, which started in the Decoy suburb at the end of 1917, quickly became general, and the other schools—especially the Marsh (infant) and Highweek (infant)—were all more or less affected; the latter was closed for a month. The epidemic was at its height in March and April, but cases were reported up to the end of June. The great majority were, as usual, very young children, and out of the total number (186) only 12 were over 10 years of age. Notwithstanding the unfavourable time of year, there was only one fatality. All cases reported were visited either by myself or the Health Visitor, and cards of instruction were distributed.

**SCARLET FEVER** was limited to two isolated attacks in young children; the origin of disease was obscure. Both were treated at the Hospital.

**DIPHTHERIA.**—Six cases, as compared with fifteen in the previous year; these were scattered over nine months, and only two of them had any inter-association. Two were in children under fifteen, the remainder being young adults; there was no fatality. All were removed to Hospital. During the year I sent up 94 swabs, and 27 "carriers" were discovered. Out of 60 children admitted to the Union, House or Cottage Homes, 20 or 33 per cent. were found to be infected.

**TYPHOID FEVER.**—Only one case was reported; this patient was a young adult who came home ill from a neighbouring town. The attack was a severe one, and ended fatally.

**DIARRHOEA** was little in evidence, and only one death was registered.

**PHTHISIS.**—Thirty-eight cases were reported: Four of these were visitors who have since left the district; two others were (by request) not visited. Of the remaining 32, severe illness was said to be the starting point in four (acute rheumatism, influenza, scarlet fever and pneumonia); fourteen had a bad family history. Occupations were various; five were invalided out of the army or navy.

No definite insanitary conditions or overcrowding were found; twenty-four had a separate bedroom, while in five other cases there was only one other occupant. Eight were school children under 14, while fifteen were over 30 years of age; twelve have had sanatorium treatment, while eight have since died.

Other forms of tubercular disease produced eight notifications, in which the peritoneum (2) glands of the neck (2), brain, testicle, spine and knee were respectively affected; two of those cases ended fatally, and one has left the district.

I have also visited cases previously notified, and keep on record their movements and condition. At the end of 1918 there were 94 tubercular patients living in the district.

**INFLUENZA** was generally prevalent in October and November: During the year there were 26 deaths from this cause, two of which however were registered in July; then October was credited with 5 fatalities, November with 17, and December with 2. As regards age and sex distribution, under five years there were two deaths (males); between 5 and 15 years, 4 (2 males and 2 females); between 15 and 25 years, 3 (1 male and 2 females); between 25 and 45 years, 11 (5 males and 6 females); between 45 and 65 years, 4 (3 males and 1 female); and over the latter age, 2 (1 male and 1 female).

The Schools were closed for a month, and a list of simple directions, on the lines suggested by the Local Government Board, was published in the two local newspapers, which reach practically everyone. The manager of the two cinema theatres voluntarily excluded children, except from one matinee per week. There is no continuous performance here.

The chief local industries are the Railway Works and the Tanyard. Many of the employees in the latter were attacked, while the railwaymen did not suffer to any extent. Speaking generally the disease invaded all sections of the community.

**ISOLATION HOSPITAL.**—During the past year 26 cases were treated from the combined area, viz.: 1 typhoid fever (Urban); 15 scarlet fever (13 Rural, 2 Urban); 10 diphtheria (4 Rural, 6 Urban). Besides these a number of diphtheria "carriers"—chiefly admissions to the Union House or cottages homes—were isolated till free from infect on.

**SMALL POX HOSPITAL** remains in statu quo.

**MIDWIVES ACT** is administered by the County Council. A Maternity and Infant Welfare Centre was opened early in the year, and Mrs. Richardson was the nurse appointed for this work by the County Council. After about four months Miss Arthur, and a little later again Miss Milburn, were successively in charge. At the end of the year there were about 30 children on the books, but if there is no further change of nurses, and certain structural alterations are carried out—the accommodation at present inadequate—a much better attendance will no doubt be recorded in course of time. It is proposed to include the caretaker's cottage and thereby obtain the extra rooms; a small and accessible consulting room is much needed. The Council have arranged to carry this out as soon as a suitable house can be provided for the caretaker. There is also a school clinic which is attended by Miss Milburn on Wednesdays; this is doing excellent work.

**SALE OF FOODS AND DRUGS ACT** is administered by the police. The following samples were taken for analysis during the year—42 in all: Arrow root, 1; baking powder, 1; beer, 2; cider, 1; cocoa, 1; coffee, 1; cornflower, 1; custard, 1; margarine, 1; milk (new), 23; milk (skim), 3; mustard, 2; pepper, 1; sweets, 1; tea, 2.

One sample of new milk was found to be deficient in fat to the extent of 16 per cent.

**WATER SUPPLY.**—That of Torquay, has been ample during the year; no shortage in the outlying parts of the district, which depend on springs and wells, has been reported.

**SEWERAGE SYSTEM** has been in good working order.

**SCAVENGING.**—House refuse is removed three times a week in the central portion of the town and twice in the outskirts; the work is done by the Council's employees.

**DAIRIES, COWSHEDS and MILKSHOPS.**—There are 28 milk sellers on the list, of whom 19 are cow-keepers; the number of milking cows is about 200.

The shippers are visited regularly by Mr. Judd and myself twice a year, and generally speaking were found in good order.

**SLAUGHTERHOUSES.** The public abattoir is now in its second year of existence, and the importance of meat inspection is, I think, fully recognised by the public. During the latter part of the year, the building served a large area under the Ministry of Food, and on some days is used to the limits of its capacity. Full details are given in Mr. Judd's report.

There is only one private slaughter-house not much used; this is always kept in good order.

**HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.**

—A new building scheme—long contemplated, and daily becoming more urgent—is now, at the end of the war, a practical proposition. In a town surrounded by hills some difficulty has been encountered in obtaining a site fairly level, and at the same time within a reasonable distance from the station and central parts. It is true that there are a few open spaces left, but in my opinion these should not be encroached on. The population is, in many areas, far too much congested as it is, and to future generations these same spaces will be invaluable. It is probable that Newton, from its position, industrial facilities and residential attractions, will eventually develop into a much larger town. All such development should, I think, take place on the outskirts, not only to prevent future congestion, but to relieve as far as possible that which now exists. The Council are negotiating, and—with the consent of the Local Government Board—will purchase

a plot of 29 acres, known as Buckland Brake, on which at least 200 cottages can be erected. This lies on rising ground to the south-east of the town, and is easily accessible; the sub-soil is sand and gravel, and it is open to the sun practically all day. Taking everything into consideration, I am of opinion that this is the best building area available; it is important that operations should be begun with the least possible delay.

No houses were condemned during the year; indeed to do so means that the tenants would either cause overcrowding if accommodated elsewhere, or have no other resource than the Institution.

**COMMON LODGING HOUSES** have been regularly inspected by Mr. Judd and myself; they are invariably clean and well kept.

**SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION and SANITATION.**—No work of importance has been carried out during the year.

H. B. MAPLETON,

Medical Officer of Health.

REPORT OF Mr. H. JUDD,

Sanitary Inspector.

COWSHEDS and DAIRIES.

There are 28 registered dairies in the district this year, as compared with 29 for 1917.

Most of them were found clean and well kept, but there are a few where this does not always apply, and consequently such dairies have to be more frequently looked up than the others, in order to ensure that the necessary degree of cleanliness is maintained.

The number of notices issued for the cleaning of dairies was 15; also one for drainage alterations, all of which were duly complied with.

SLAUGHTER-HOUSES.

**Public Abattoir.**—This is situated in the Avenue Road, and is used by five of our local butchers. By arrangement with the Council, the Ministry of Food commenced operations there early in December last. Animals slaughtered on the premises during the past 12 months: Bullocks, 275; sheep, 1,617; calves, 121; pigs, 110; total, 2,123.

**Private Slaughter-Houses.**—There is only one private slaughter-house within the area of our district, and this has practically been in disuse since the grading of animals has been in operation.

FOOD INSPECTION.

During the past year, the work in connection with the food inspection of the district has occupied a good deal of time, the number of visits made to the slaughter-houses, market, and butchers and other shops being 562.

Below is given a list of carcasses, etc., condemned as being diseased, or otherwise unfit for human consumption, the total weight of which being 4 tons, 10 cwt., and 12 lbs.:

Bullock carcasses	...	...	13
Sheep carcasses	...	...	14
Pig carcasses	...	...	3
Calf carcasses	...	...	1
Hindquarters of beef	...	...	3
Imported bullocks' cheeks	...	...	7
Diseased organs	...	...	411
Boxes of bloaters	...	...	4
Boxes of kippered herrings	...	...	2
Also 131lbs. of beef and 12lbs. of mutton.			

FACTORIES and WORKSHOPS.

The number of workshops on the register is 56, and these have been inspected by the Medical Officer of Health and myself. Beyond the need of limewashing, which was found necessary in seven bakehouses, no infringement of the Factory Act was met with. All the notices were duly complied with.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES.

There are two common lodging houses in the district with available accommodation for 62 lodgers.

At each visit made the premises and bedding were found clean in both cases, and no overcrowding or other irregularity was met with.

The only notice which had to be served related to the damp condition of a bedroom in the East-street lodging house. This has been attended to.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF DISTRICT AND RESULTS.

Total number of inspections	...	2319
Visits to slaughter-houses	...	422
Visits to food shops	...	93
Visits to market	...	47
Visits to dairies and cowsheds	...	73
Visits to workshops	...	75
Visits to common lodging houses	...	8
Drains relaid or repaired	...	34
Drain tests applied	...	116
Choked drains cleared	...	19
W.C.'s repaired	...	21
Houses repaired	...	53
Houses cleansed and limewashed	...	21
Yards paved	...	3
Urinals built	...	1
Offensive accumulations removed	...	14
Overcrowding abated	...	2
Room fumigated	...	76
Lots of bedding, etc., steam disinfected	...	48
Informal notices served	...	106
Informal notices complied with	...	98
Informal notices carried forward	...	8
Legal notices served	...	3
Legal notices complied with	...	3
Letters written	...	385

H. JUDD, Sanitary Inspector.

REPORT OF Mr. C. D. WHITE,

Surveyor.

Report of Plans received for the year ending 31st December, 1918.

Plans approved by my Council in the year, 1918:

THREE.—Workshops at the Tannery.  
ONE.—Extension Wool Shed at the Tannery.  
ONE.—Saddle Shed at the Tannery.  
ONE.—Hospital Extension Ward, V.A.D. Hospital.  
ONE.—Dining-room, V.A.D. Hospital.  
THREE.—Additions to houses, such as Bay Windows, Conservatory, etc.  
ONE.—Greenhouse.  
ONE.—Stable and Coach House.

COLERIDGE D. WHITE, Surveyor.

April 20th, 1918.



